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ABSTRACT

To provide a learning unit on leadership, religious tolerance, and social customs, this paper used a 16th century Mogul Indian prince's life to promote discussion on these topics. The story of Akbar's life included his early years, education, and leadership ability, and advice from Kautilya, a fourth century Indian statesman, was interspersed within the narrative. Fascinated by religions and known for his religious tolerance, Akbar encouraged religious debates at his court and settled a war by marrying a Hindu princess. Other included aspects of 16th century Indian history and customs are these topics: the battle at Chitor, harems, Indian time-keeping devices, and hunting. The topics that are discussed throughout the narrative are: (1) leadership abilities; (2) leadership education; (3) moral values; (4) leadership advice; (5) social customs and practices; and (6) religious influences on politics. A 20-item bibliography and three woodcut prints are included. (DJC)

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LEADERSHIP, INDIAN STYLE
A COMPARISON OF KAUTILYA'S ADVICE WITH AKBAR'S EXPERIENCE

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PREFACE

This work is dedicated to those of you who fail to see the purpose of history and find memorization of facts for seemingly endless multiple-choice tests dull. History is, first of all, a story, a story of people living, dying, falling in love, making the best of a bad situation or a mess of the best that life has to offer. Almost every life has adventure, though some seem action-packed. If he were alive today, Akbar, riding his favorite horse, would be featured on the cover of Sports Illustrated frozen in the full swing of polo, Mogul style. He would also be Time's "Man of the Year" and we would eagerly be skimming People magazine to find out about his latest marriage. Besides being interesting, his life is significant which brings us to the fun part. "History", as the Greeks used the term, was a verb, a process of inquiry, a way of thinking about change to understand the present (Reilly, The West & the World Introduction XI). What is worth knowing about Akbar? What is the relationship of the past to the present which can help us better understand the present?

One thing worth knowing is that Akbar was considered a superb leader by his contemporaries. Now to historicize a bit, was Akbar truly a great leader, a man who made a difference? Or did he just have good press? Are the qualities of leadership the same no matter where or when a great leader lives or is a leader the product of his time? Every four years, we Americans go

through the process of picking a leader. Is it style, ideas, television ads, or past performance that makes a difference? Can we learn enough about the characteristics of leadership to elect the best choices? Can the qualities of leadership be defined historically or does one learn to be a leader through the examples or advice of those who have experienced governing?

In the fourth century B. C. Kautilya, an Indian statesman of the Mauryan King Chandragupta, wrote insightful instructions for good leadership. Kautilya's advise is interwoven in a tapestry with the actions of Akbar and an account of the present which hopefully will lead you to an analysis of the relationship of the past to the present. After you have read and considered the material, return to these questions of leadership for further consideration. It is the process of critical questioning which leads one to understanding. That is the process of history.

MEET AKBAR

What kind of man would gallop full speed across a sinking pontoon bridge on an elephant, jump into a pit with a wild cheetah or keep a harem of 5000 women? Akbar, the third ruler of the Indian Mogul Empire, was a most extraordinary man. Kidnapped at the age of five, Akbar found himself displayed on the ramparts of Kabhul as his father's cannon whistled past (Smith 18). Of course, once his father, Humayun, recognized the small boy, the attack became a seige and Akbar was eventually returned to

Humayun by the kidnapper, Akbar's uncle. At thirteen Akbar was king and at twenty-six he built his own city, Fathepur Sikri. Akbar, a contemporary of Queen Elizabeth I, ruled for almost fifty years.

EDUCATING A WILLFULL PRINCE

What kind of education would you design for a man who would rule, what some say, was the richest empire in the world in the sixteenth century, a territory including Afganistan, Pakistan, and Northern India? Should the education of a monarch with the power to make war, sign treaties, sentence a subject to death or make long lasting tax decisions be different from the subjects you are required to take to prepare you for U.S. citizenship? Should a monarch have graduation requirements?

Kautilya, a brilliant Hindu statesman in the fourth century observed that:

> The Royal family, in which the prince is left undisciplined, breaks up at the mere attack of the enemy like moth-eaten wood at a slight touch...So the prince, on reaching the proper age, should be properly trained, following a definite curriculum...and should develop... kingly qualities of an inviting nature, those of the intellect, those of the will and the King's distinctive personal qualities. (Mukherjee 78)

What kinds of courses develop "the intellect and the will"? Read the following account of Akbar's life and analyze your answers in a class discussion.

Akbar's education began with the court astrologers called into consultation to select the most auspicious day for Akbar to begin his first formal lesson. This was the day of great significance to Akbar's highly educated family. His tutor was carefully selected, the court prepared, servants alerted. The hour arrived but Akbar was no where to be found. He had disappeared "dressed for sport" (Gascoigni 79). Being kidnapped and rescued from the thick of battle must have made reading seem a bit dull. His lessons went from bad to worse. Akbar's poor tutor finally resorted to training carrier pigeon lessons hoping to keep his student's fleeting interest. However, this was not the approach to literacy likely to win the king's approval. The poor teacher was dismissed as were tutors two, three, and four. In desperation, Humayun wrote his son a long letter urging Akbar to study. The letter included the following couplet:

> Sit not idle, 'tis not the time for play,
> Tis the time for arts and for work. (Smith 17)

All of this advice fell on deaf ears. The student much preferred the full tilt of a wild camel race or lurching to attack on the back of a fighting elephant. Akbar grew up, all but illerate. For the remainder of his life, he depended on

storytellers and educated advisors for the printed word. Instead, he became an astute listener and developed a memory for intricate detail. As king, he frequently delegated authority to his advisors to make decisions and implement policies for him. But each advisor's work was evaluated frequently and carefully. Akbar is remembered for the brilliant capable advisors he appointed (Nehru 167).

Akbar has a reputation for being curious about everything. He was as fascinated by religion as he was politics. He knew about the discovery of America. The Portuguese Jesuits, invited to his court to explain Christianity, wrote that "in his eagerness for knowledge, he tried to learn everything at once, like a hungry man trying to swallow his food in a single gulp" (Nehru 168). Father Monserrate, a visitor to Akbar's court from 1580 to 1582, remarked about Akbar's illiteracy that:

> He can give his opinion on any question so shrewdly and keenly, that no one who did not know that he is not literate would suppose him to be anything but learned and erudite...He excelled many most learned subjects in eloquence. (Ansari, European Travellers 5)

Despite the fact that he could not read, Akbar had an enormous collection of books. His close advisor, Abul Fazi was appointed to keep accurate records of the court for a massive history. Just information about the emperor, his kingdom and his

administration amounts to almost fifteen hundred pages (Gascoigne 103).

In Akbar's capital of Fatehpur Sikri, he designed a unique private audience hall, the Divan-i-Khas. From the outside this building appears to be two stories, but the inside is entirely open with a "massive octagonal column in the center. The top of the column is ten feet in diameter with a low railing around the outer edge which can only be reached by four bridges from opposite corners of the building (Smith 323). Though the use of this building is still unclear (Beach 15), it is typical of Akbar's leadership style that he probably arranged himself comfortably on an oriental rug surrounded by pillows of silk to hear all sides of an argument presented by his advisors from the four bridges with others listening below. His ministers could be summoned across the bridge when necessary to do his bidding (Gascoignie 110).

In an analysis of leadership written for his Maukyan King Chandragupta in the 4th century B.C., Kautilya wrote:

> Power of deliberation is intellectual strength; the position of a prosperous treasury and a strong army is the strength of sovereignty; and material power is physical strength. (Mukherjee 36)

Is it possible to be educated without knowing how to read

and write? How do you define educated? To what extent does curiousity relate to being well informed? Does a leader have to be well informed to make good decisions?

DEFENDING THE TURF

The years and years of sports and hunting was not all worthless. Akbar won on the battlefield. He once rode horseback for 240 miles in twenty-four hours much to the chagrin of his surprised enemies (Watson 112-13). Akbar began fighting the year he was crowned when a little Hindu gadfly named Hemu revolted and conquered Delhi. That was difficult to ignore so fourteen year old Akbar and his trusted advisor met Hemu in battle on the plains of Hindustan November 5, 1556. The battle came to a sudden end when Hemu got stuck in the eye with an arrow, passed out, was captured and decapitated. His followers were rounded up and met with the same fate. However, all was not lost. A victory pillar of the loosing heads was constructed in honor of the occasion (Gascoigne 75).

Akbar often reminded his subjects that "a monarch should be ever intent on conquest, otherwise his neighbors might resist in arms against him" (Gascoigne 82). In 1567 Akbar led his men on the famous attack at Chitor. Akbar's enemy was the Rana of Mewar who left an army of Rajput warriors to defend the rocky fortress. The Rajputs had arrived in India 600 years before as Huns. They formed a fierce warrior caste and were worthy opponents in

battle (Lalwani 106).

Kautilya had advised his king that:

> If neither persuasion nor compromise succeeds then Bheda is recommended. Bheda signifies the policy of divide and rule. It is an important adjunct of diplomacy through which even a strong king can be brought under subjection. (Mukherjee 38)

Though Chitor is often taught as the decisive battle between Hindus and Muslums for nothern India, the fact is that Akbar already had the significant support of two great Hindu leaders, Bhagwan Das and Todar Mal plus he had established an alliance with the Rajput rular of Amber (Jaipur) through marriage. In northern India political advantage rather than religion determined allies in war.

Chitor was a huge, impregnable fortress built on a rocky ledge under the Rajput command of Jaimall Rathor; Akbar's strategy was to bombard the fort, to tunnel under the fortress or to build a covered roadway, protected by its own wall right up to the fortress and chisle a hole inside (Gascoigne 90).

Bombardment proved ineffective since Akbar's cannons were forced to fire up and over the wall without being able to take

aim. The next ploy was tunnel burrowing. Two tunnels were started under what today would be no man's land. Inside Chitor the defenders had their ears to the ground hoping to detect where the tunnels were so that they could start digging defense tunnels for an underground battle. Akbar's sappers got to the wall undetected with a healthy mound of gunpowder to be stacked at the end of the tunnel. The plan was to light a fuse in both tunnels for two simultaneous explosions to crumple the wall followed by an attack. Unfortunately, the two fuses did not burn at the same rate. 200 men were trapped and killed in one tunnel when the other fuse finally set off the gunpowder in the second tunnel (90).

The last strategy was to build a twisting, turning, covered roadway protected by walls up to Chitor where a section of the fortress wall could be demolished and the defenders attacked. Construction of the roadway inched along with construction of its own walls of dirt and rock. Shielded by a roof of wood beams and rawhide, gunners and cannon were positioned at the twists and turns to provide continual bombardment of the fort. The road inside was wide enough for ten horsemen to ride in a line and the walls high enough to protect a man riding an elephant. As the roadway twisted and stretched towards Chitor, the place not to be was at the front end where the construction was. About 200 workmen a day were killed even though screens of rawhide offered partial protection from the shower of mussle loaders above (91-92).

Four months after the battle began, a breach was made in the wall. Fighting intensified. No one knew who the Hindu was that Akbar shot with his trusty musket, Sangram, until fires were seen at various places inside the fort. Those fires meant that the Rajput women were burning themselves rather than being taken captive and that Akbar must have killed the Hindu commander, Jaimall Rathor. 8000 Rajput defenders prepared to fight to death in their final battle (Smith 64). Akbar won that battle and then killed the 40,000 peasants living inside the fort (Gascoigne 92).

The victory at Chitor meant empire expansion in all directions. Most Rajput fighters in northern India understood the significance of the battle and pledged loyality to Akbar so he now had a cadre of solid support for future conquests. The Rajputs became the cornerstone of Mogul strength.

Is it necessary for a ruler to be so brutal in warfare as to build a victory tower of looser's heads or kill 40,000 people at the end of a battle? The diplomatic statesman, Kautilya advised his king:

> Values can come within the range of politics only as data, without posing any question about "ought" or "ought not".....the decision making processes of the political authority should be based on practical necessity without having any reference to theology and

(Gascoigne 76)

so-called "morality". (Mukherjee 45)

Can conflict be ended by violent example? To what extent is your answer based on your own moral values? Does your answer apply to all cases? Considering Kautilya's advice should necessary actions by the state be separated from morality? Based on your previous answers, should the United States have used the atomic bomb to end World War II in 1945? Research the issue and defend your thesis with fact.

Akbar settled into three no-fail methods of empire expansion, conquest, marriage, or treaty, each accompanied by a significant contribution to the government (Gascoigne 82). The Mogul treasury was like a huge Venice fly-trap poised to devour tribute and/or taxes at a moment's notice. Incessant demands for more and larger expenditures became a tradition. Warfare required an expensive army which required more warfare to get the loot to pay for the more expensive army. For example, Braudel, in his analysis of economic facts about the Moguls, discovered that horses which were difficult to raise in India's hot steamy climate, had to be imported and sold for four times the price of English horses during the same period (Reilly, Readings 65). Another source of expenditures was the court. The opulence of the Mogul court became legendary. The emperor had to look and act like an emperor (Patnaik 16). At one point Akbar had a fountain drained and filled with coins so he could give his visitors fists full and scoops full of money. Such gestures

tended to keep supporters interested and loyal.

Kautilya had warned his prince that "all undertakings depend on finance. Hence foremost attention should be paid to the treasury" (Smith 268). Akbar and his advisors took steps to reform tax collection and improve trade but these measures were never fully successful (Gascoigne 105). So constant successful warfare appeared to be an economic necessity.

Before the Moguls Moslems from various parts of Asia had invaded northern India for centuries. On the average each of these invasions resulted in reigns that lasted about forty years. A winning army was a double edged sword. What incentive would keep a successful fighter from organizing his followers into his very own army to attack the ruler? Previous to Akbar's reign, each noble had his own fief, was free to collect taxes, establish his own political clout and make mischief if it was to his advantage to do so. A standing army waiting around for the next fight could be a problem (Smith 261). Akbar changed all that. Akbar collected the taxes through his bureaucracy and paid the nobility a handsome wage. Though expensive this plan enhanced loyality (Watson 114). In return for his money, the noble or mansabdar was expected to supply the state with recruits and animals when an army was needed. A top grade mansabdar was to deliver 5000 men, 340 horses, 100 elephants and 260 mules with carts. Although this was the agreement, no mansabdar actually supplied more than 1000 men. The actual number of recruits

shrank as the empire aged. To keep less honest mansabdars from counting the same man twice on different lists, Akbar demanded minute descriptions of each enlistee. Horses were a simplier matter since each horse was branded. Some mansabdars succeeded in fooling their ruler even with these precautions (Smith 263-265).

Once the army was in existence, off they went to fight. The European concept of a trained, disciplined infantry marching in step to war was non-existent. Because Akbar was a great leader, he simply led the mob into battle and they won (Smith 266).

About 2000 years before Kautilya advised his Mauryan king to:

> keep the branches of revenue and the army under his own control...As the finance and army are the two great pillars for maintaining supremacy, it is quite correct not to trust any other person with these offices and these should be under direct control. (Mukherjee 84)

Would this advice guarantee a strong leader? Does this still apply to modern leaders? Why or why not? Are you satisfied with you answer as it applies to the Iran-Contra Affair?

The first ripple of rebellion usually prompted Akbar to organize a hunt in the vicinity. It could also be used as a

political game of cat and mouse. The favorite Mogul style hunt was always an impressive display of what the army could do if called into action against trouble makers. Using foot soldiers as beaters to scare the game and drive the animals ahead, the army formed and gradually tightened a great circle around the game.

In one hunt the circle was sixty miles in diameter with 50,000 soldiers gradually reducing the circle to four miles. Akbar entered the circle to hunt first using any one of a variety of weapons from a musket to a lasso. He is credited with killing one thousand nineteen animals with his favorite musket alone. When he tired, the mansabdors, then the court servants and finally the army would take their turn. Soldiers who formed the circle made a huge, secure fence of wattle mats to insure that the animals remained enclosed while they hunted because anyone who let an animal escape was fined. The center was a wild free for all of animals, weapons, and hunters. This was the perfect time to settle an old grudge and some did (Gascoigne 86). With 50,000 soldiers demonstrating their skills in the neighborhood, rebellion may not have seemed an appropriate response. Instead it was the perfect time for Akbar to deal with local issues. No wonder Akbar's famous ancestors, Genghis Khan and Timur considered the hunt excellent military training. Hunting was a political asset too.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES THEN AND NOW

Akbar was also very fond of capturing cheetahs which he trained for deer hunting as dogs are used hunting birds today (Du Jarric 10). The traditional method to trap a cheetah was to dig a pit and cover it with grass. Sometimes though the cheetah crashed through to the pit floor and broke its leg. So Akbar redesigned the pit making it a shallow one with a trap door. Occasionally for a little excitement, the emperor lowered himself into the pit to bring out the wild cheetah for trainers. He was always pleased to add one more to the 1000 trained cheetahs he kept for hunting (Ansari, Social Life 161).

From the sixteenth to the twentieth century, hunting spawned a life style for the privileged. Hunting coupled with demands for more agriculture created new environmental problems. Now the issue is how to control poaching and increase animal habitat in a poor, over-populated nation, but it can be done. After the Indian tiger population of 40,000 shriveled to 2000, the World Wildlife Fund adopted the Indian tiger. The deer population increased and the tiger population has doubled by improving the plant cover in protected habitats (Nye).

In the sixteenth century Akbar encouraged peasants to extend the land under cultivation (Gascoigne 103) to enlarge the tax base and to provide more food in a land periodically hit with

severe famine (Smith 282). He never had to consider environmental problems of the magnitude which confront modern nations and cross national boundaries.

What type of leader is necessary to establish a consensus for action at home and abroad on environmental issues?

TRADITION AND CHANGE OF TECHNOLOGY

Akbar strictly rationed his time into segments so that the affairs of state received his constant attention. A traditional Indian day was divided into 60 hours of 24 minutes each. (Mukherjee 82). Here is Akbar's schedule adjusted to the Western hour of sixty minutes.

4 hours 30 minutes	Sleep
2 hours	Prayer
1 hour 12 minutes	Dressing
4 hours 30 minutes	Darshan-receiving reports and petitions, hearing judicial cases inspecting parades of men or animals
48 minutes	Lunch
Lunch until late evening	Government business
Late evening	Recommendations and petitions of the royal

	household in the harem
Night	Some free time to listen
	to literary arguments or
	music

(Ansari, Social Life 102-3)

A rigorous, exacting schedule like this demanded that time be measured accurately to the minute. This is the schedule of a modern man, not a medieval man who would measure his time from sunrise to sunset. Privileged Indians of the period owned spring clocks of European origin. However, there was no rapid movement by Akbar or any other wealthy Indian who kept scores and scores of skilled craftsmen to copy these clocks and sell them in the market. Most people were left to measure time with the hour glass or water clock. Father Monseratte, Akbar's guest from Goa, described the water clock as a device consisting

> of a brazed vessel filled with water and a hollow bronze cone of such a size that exactly a quarter of an hour is taken for the water to fill it through a small hole in the bottom. This cone is placed on the top of the vessel filled with water and the water runs through the hole in its bottom. When the cone is full, it sinks and thus shows that a quarter of an hour has elapsed. (Ansari, European Travellers 10).

This singular lack of interest in tools, or new mechanical

processes, was the subject of wonder in European diaries quoted by Bravdel in his research about the Indian Mogul economy

> Europeans were often astonished at the small number and rudimentary nature of the tools used by Indian craftsmen..."a deficience of tools" which, as Sonnerat explained with illustration, meant that a sawyer took "three days to make a plank which would take our workmen but an hour." Who could fail to be surprised that "the fine muslins we seek so eagerly are made on looms composed of four peices of wood stuck in the ground"? Tools were made almost entirely of wood, unlike those of Europe which already contained a large porportion of iron even before the industrial revolution. Archiac methods prevailed: For example, the Indian version of the Persian designed wheel for irrigation and pumping water used wooden gears, wooden cogwheels, leather bags, earthenware pots and was propelled by animal or human power until the 19th century. The reason for continued use of very few tools of archiac design of wood had more to do with cost rather than technology. Labor was cheap and plentiful. (Reilly, Readings 60)

Though Akbar was an excellent marksman and paid special attention to the manufacture of guns and cannons, Portuguese designs were superior. He was very disappointed "when the astute

authorities at Goa politely declined to furnish him with their better weapons" (Smith 266). Once again he made no attempt to copy the designs (Nehru 278). Perhaps the ready supply of cheap labor did discourage interest in technology. His empire extended to the Arabian Sea where the Portuguese had established a maritime empire, yet he failed to take any interest in shipbuilding (Nehru 278). He seemed satisfied with a land based kingdom. His curiosity had limits. Perhaps he simply failed to appreciate its potential. Is it the responsibility of the government and its leaders to encourage technological advances? Research the experiences of Portuguese traders in Japan during the same period. How does the attitude of the two societies differ?

THE WOMAN'S ROLE

Women in Hindu society never really occupied a position of equality. However, with the advent of Muslim conquests in the North, it became fashionable among upper caste Hindus to copy the ruling class Muslim practice of Purdah. Purdah was the custom of secluding women. Women's status sank to a new all time low. Not only was a woman always dependent on either her father, husband, or son, but now she was confined within harem walls (Nehru 158). It became difficult to get an education. Backwards and ignorant, women were isolated from society.

Akbar's harem was a small city of women, children, and

eunchs. With 300 plus wives and a grand total of 5000 women, Akbar organized his harem as a court within a court. Each queen, by dowry, was enormously wealthy and had her own throne, reception hall, court of attendants, servants, advisors and ladies-in-waiting (Patnaik 73). The harem as a whole had a full complement of administrators, entertainers, cooks, purchasing agents, and guards. Armed female guards patrolled inside the wall while eunchs guarded the area immediately outside reinforced by Rajput warriors kept at a safe distance (Ansari, Social Life 70-1). Huge amounts of money were spent inside the harem on gardens, ceremonies, jewelry, entertainment and even women astrologers to district those living a caged life of enforced leisure. Any infraction of harem rules required immediate discipline. A women servant caught kissing an eunch was fined what amounted to Rs. 60,000 in cash and jewelry and was "set into an arm pit, her feet into stakes, bare-headed without food for three days and two nights." But the poor eunch was condemned to (be trampled by) elephants (Ansari, Social Life 70-1).

Just as it is today in India, marriages in the sixteenth century were arranged. For all of his power, Akbar could not pop the question to the girl of his dreams. Usually, old ladies within the harem arranged the marriages. Private messages were shunted back and forth between aunts and grandmothers until an agreement was reached. Fathers could also arrange marriages when political or economic advantages were possible (75-6).

Since Islam allowed a man four wives, Akbar's 296 other wives were considered wives of contract and of a lesser status. Perhaps because of his extensive experience, Akbar recommended that his male subjects have only one wife. In 1562 Akbar broke with tradition to marry a Hindu Rajput princess presented by her father, the Raja of Amber (Jaipur). This marriage was diplomatically brilliant. Amber (Jaipur), boardering Delhi and Agra, was annexed into the empire without as much as the slash of a single sword. A Rajput alliance, with all of the superb fighters that represented, was formalized. The marriage was a landmark for Hindus as the advent of a new period of toleration. And best of all, in August of 1569, this same Hindu princess gave birth to the next emperor of the Moguls Jahangir. Hindu and Muslim intermarriage through the next two generations produced rulers more Indian than Mogul (Gascoigne 81-81).

Today, harems are a fossil of the past but arranged marriages still are the norm. A vast majority of all Indian marriages are arranged either through the family network of acquaintances or through the Sunday classified ads. The goal is to link families of similar backgrounds (Fishlock 24-25). Love is the result of marriage, not the reverse. Indian girls support the practice with such reasons as (1) Nothing is so demeaning to a Western girl as being home on Saturday night without a date We don't have to waste our time trying to attract boys for the dating (2) Western love matches don't work (3) Our parents

are older and have more experience with people than we do. They are more likely to select a good partner for us.

Although Akbar abolished child marriages and the sati, both practices continue (Gascoigne 108). India was shocked this fall when Roop Kanwar voluntarily burned herself to death on her husband's funeral pyre in the age-old but widely repudiated practice of sati. While Muslim women have the right to an inheritance, the social practice among lower caste Hindus is for the widow's property, particularily if she has no son, to be absorbed by the extended family. The widow systematically is reduced to a nonperson through a series of rituals.

> In most parts of the country a widow is considered a kulakshani (an evil omen)...She can wear no make-up jewelry, or colorful sarees. She must eat bland food, and keep away from joyous functions. Among the Rajputs, a widow is given no bread for the first 12 days of her husband's death. Also, her bangles are forcibly broken, sindoor (vermillion) removed and, dressed in blue, she is fed on flour blended in water. She is made to sit in a dark room with her legs folded under her thighs. She cannot share in jokes. She is never allowed to go even to the house of a relative. (India Today 73)

Nor is she allowed to remarry. Girls married between the

ages of seven and thirteen to men two or three times their age are widowed as early as fifteen. If they are forced out of their husband's family, they can look forward to a life of heavy manual labor, perhaps piece work or she can beg. One widow is paid Rs. 12 for every 1000 bindis she makes (72). Perhaps Roop Kanwar was correct, the sati is a better choice.

Compare what you have just read with the status of women in Kirala, a small southern state at the southern tip of India on the Arabian sea. In a 29 January 1988 New York Times article "Births Are Kept Down But the Women Aren't," Steven R. Weisman reports that:

> With nearly 800 million people, India has more than doubled its population since 1947...At that rate, the country will exceed a billion people around the turn of the century.
>
> Kerala...has had a different experience...
>
> For example, India's annual birth rate for the past decade has been about 33 for every 1,000 people, Kerala's is 23 per 1,000 and continuing to drop.
>
> Some experts point out that Kerala's record of respecting women goes back to ancient times...
>
> The Nayars, for example, developed a so-called matrilineal society in which women inherited family property and, according to customs of plural marriage, could choose a number of visiting husbands.

> The British outlawed these practices...but some feminists assert that they continue to influence the self-confidence of all women in Kerala.
>
> Today Kerala is the only state in India where women outnumber men, apparently because women in Kerala eat better than men...The literacy rate for women is more than 70%, nearly three times the national rate. Perhaps most impressive, the average age of marriage for women is 22 years, compared with a little more than 18 nationwide.
>
> Kerala also is one of the few states in India with a powerful Communist Party...and it is one of the nation's most heavily Christian states...with Christians making up about a fifth of the population. Both characteristics have been cited as factors in the state's heavy spending on health and social programs.
>
> Other factors in Kerala's lower birth rate...are its legacy of education brought by Christian missionaries and the unusually high number of job opportunities for women. (4)

Can the best of leaders change social practices? Or are social customs and practices, no matter how unjust, the product of thousands of years of tradition and history where there is little change no matter who the leader is. In a democratic society like India, is it possible to achieve social change without coercion?

RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

Kautilya advised his King Chandragupta Maurya sometime after 321 B.C. that he

> was to live only for the prosperity and happiness of his subjects for which Kautilya advises the "national king" to merge even his identity with the people he was to rule by adopting their manners, customs, and language and following them in their faith with which they celebrate their national religious and congregational festivals..(Mukherjee 79)

Early in his reign Akbar began constructing a bridge of religious toleration between Muslim and Hindu. He was fascinated with religion and sent for every type of religious teacher from Jain to Christian to debate their views in court. He adopted religious practices of one and wore the symbol of another with most of the experts, except the Orthodox Muslim, believing he was about to convert to their religion. In the end, he started his own religion, a synthesis of beliefs which did not survive after his death.

Besides his policy of marrying into Hindu families that

counted, he made service to the state open to all. Brilliant Hindus were among his closest advisors during his half century of reign. He ended discriminatory taxation of Hindus over the objection of his orthodox advisors (Watson 113). Though his policy should not be confused with the American notion of separation of church and state, this policy was a milestone in Mogul rule. Akbar wrote in a letter to Shah Abbas Safavi of Persia that

> The various religious communities are divine treasures entrusted to us by God. We must love them as such. It should be our firm faith that every religion is blessed by Him, and our earnest endeavour to enjoy the bliss of the evergreen garden of universal toleration. The Eternal King showers his favors on all men without distinction. Kings who are "Shadows of God" should never give up this principal. (Rohitgi 53)

And yet why was Akbar so willing to risk loosing the support of orthodox Muslims? In the past decade, Americans have ruefully learned to respect the force of Islam, a lesson taught them from half a world away. Surely Islam was just as potent a force in the sixteenth century Mogul court.

The policy of religious toleration succeeded at the time because it was the answer to multifacited problems. Akbar came

to the throne soon after his father Humayun had just barely reconquered Northern India. Humayun had been driven out of India by a faction of Afghan Muslims who supported Sher Shah in a successful revolt. Preceeding that were nine successive dynasties of various sorts of Muslims in Northern India. Between 1562 and 1567 of Akbar's reign, five revolts flashed in rapid succession. It appeared that Akbar could look forward to a short life of action-packed violence, as tussels for power between Turks, Moguls, Persians, Uzbeks, Afgans, and between Muslim and Hindus became ultimate game of life and death in Northern India.

To end the bedlam, Akbar offered the Khurasanis rapid promotions, the Indian Muslims state patronage, respect for Sunni divines and persecution of the Mahdvis and Shi'ites, the Hindus abolition of the jiziah (a Moslem tax on non-believers) and abolition of the Pilgrim tax, the Rajputs, keeping their own territories provided they swore loyality with tribute. So according to Iatidar Alama Khan, Akbar's religious policies were founded on a solid bedrock of sound political considerations which included improved relations with the upper caste Hindus and careful consideration of Muslum groups within India. Akbar's personal religious views were really of secondary importance to the lasting effect of the policy. As long as Mogul rulers adhered to this policy, they remained firmly in control of a good portion of India. Each group had something to gain under the policy of religious toleration (Khan 455-65).

Ultimately, India failed to achieve a spiritual synthesis. Mogul rule and the policy of religious toleration ended with Arengzeb, the last great Mogul ruler (Lalwani 198). Today communal violence pulls democratic India in all directions at once. An incident in Meerut May 16, 1987, will serve to illustrate the point. Meerut is an Indian city of 600,000 close to Delhi where violence between Hindus and Muslims erupted. Before it was over, 150 people were killed and another 1000 were injured. The arrest of a murder suspect in the Muslim quarter led to a fight between police and Muslim. During the melee, a shop owner was stabbed and a roadside stall owned by a Muslim, but rented by a Hindu, was set on fire. Someone rushed to the local mosque to appeal by loudspeaker for all to come out and protect the faith. Muslims and Hindus poured into the streets. The riot was on.

According to an article in India Today entitled "The Agony of Meerut" June 15, 1987, there are a number of sources of the increasing violence. One is the growing number of communial orgainzations, up from a dozen in 1951 to 500 presently, and a new style leader of these organizations who is both affluent, articulate and respectable. 300,000 Muslims staged a peaceful rally in Delhi in March of 1987 where they were told that "they must fight for what they believed was their due.." (37). Another

source is an "unprecedented spurt in the construction of religious building" throughout the country leading to a greater number of "processions, meetings and use of public address systems" (38).

> But analysts say that the most important factor behind the growth of communalism has been electoral considerations. Most parties pander to minority votes in pursuit of vote banks. By one reckoning, Muslims can win only 10 seats all over the country on their own strength, but their votes--if polled as a block--can influence the outcome in at least 200 other constituencies. (38)

In short by comparing the late sixteenth century to the present, the exact opposite political motivation is true today. During Akbar's rule individual groups had something to gain by working together. Today party politicians encourage fear and appeal to special interests of religious groups to get themselves elected.

Besides religious groups, what other special interest groups work to influence public opinion and government policy in the United States? Are special interests, working to enhance their position within the government and influence policy, an inherent weakness of a democracy? Or are strong special interest groups an asset to a government? How can communial violence be

discouraged in a democracy? Or is this type of violence an indication of demagoguery?

Now that you have finished the readings about Akbar and the advise of Kautilya, what is a good leader? Go back to the beginning questions and reconsider them in a class discussion.

"This Prince is of the stature and of a type of countenance well-fitted for his royal dignity, so that one could easily recognise even at the first glance, that he is the King...He is sturdy, hearty and robust. When he laughs his face bcomes almost distorted. His expression is tranquil, serene and open, full also of dignity and when he is angry, of awful majesty...He has an acute insight and shows much wise foresight both in avoiding dangers and siezing favorable opportunities for carrying out his designs...." (Ansari, European Travellers 4)

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